



Gender Equity for Administrators

As educators responsible for preparing the next generation, it is imperative that we monitor and analyze the social and economic changes in the lives of women and men in our society. We must help students prepare for a future characterized by change in the economy, the world of work, and in society.

Females need to know that:

- Whether or not they marry and have children, they probably will work for pay outside the home for a large part of their lives (30 years on average).
- They will need to support themselves and their families.

Unless they carefully prepare for paid work, they are more likely than males to be limited to low-paying jobs that provide little opportunity for advancement, or they are more likely to be poor and dependent on social service programs.

Males need to know that:

- If they marry, they likely will not be the only person in the family who works for pay outside the home.
- They are likely to share responsibilities in the home for meals, household management, and caring for children.
- Sharing work inside and outside the home offers males the opportunity to assume greater career risks, to work in areas that once were stereotyped as appropriate only for females, to enjoy children, to share economic responsibilities, and to develop a partnership with a spouse.

All students need to know that:

- Traditional ideas about work, leadership, and social roles based on gender are unrealistic and are changing; both females and males can assume nearly any role if given adequate preparation and opportunity.
- Female and male students should investigate a wide range of opportunities available and should prepare for careers.
- It is their right to receive fair consideration and treatment in school and in employment.

School administrators can promote equity in several ways. They can:

- Recognize equity as an important issue and actively plan for it.
- Develop and implement gender-equitable policies.
- Plan for and support staff development activities related to equity; and establish a school climate that promotes excellence in education, including equity for staff, students, parents, and community.

Administrators can use the following strategies to promote gender equity at the district and school level:

1. Identify what already has been done to promote equity in the district and build on those activities.
2. Develop policies, procedures, and guidelines that specifically plan for equity.
3. Establish objectives, activities, and a timeline for activities that increase nontraditional enrollments and staffing patterns.
4. Analyze enrollment and staffing data for gender and by course to identify trends and possible intervention points.
5. Provide inservice programs on equity issues for all staff. These may include topics on current work statistics; family trends; and how to provide for a gender-equitable classroom using appropriate materials, curriculum, language, and beliefs.
6. Offer bias-free classroom technique suggestions in teacher evaluations, especially in courses where enrollments are predominantly male or female.
7. Use staff meetings and other staff communication channels to build awareness and support for equity.
8. Actively plan to recruit men and women for nontraditional teaching and administrative positions.
9. Promote gender equity issues with parents and community members through newsletters, school board members, and advisory meetings.
10. Develop a plan to review classroom, library, and guidance materials for evidence of gender bias and to modify these materials where appropriate. Adopt and use selection criteria for new materials that reflect diversity and equity.
11. Organize curriculum revision projects that redesign program content and activities to make them appropriate for both males and females and to prepare students for expanding and changing roles of women and men.
12. Offer exploratory courses at the upper elementary and middle/junior high school levels to encourage students to explore nontraditional options and familiarize them with language and equipment of the area.
13. Design the master class schedule so it encourages enrollment by males and females in every class, i.e., a traditionally female class is not scheduled at the same time as a traditionally male class.

Administrators: How Does Your District Rate?

The following is a self-quiz to determine the “equity level” in your school. Circle your response to each question below, then refer to scoring section to assess school districts.

1. Has your school completed a thorough self-study to identify equity needs?	YES	NO
2. Are you working to correct problems using concrete activities, goals, and timelines?	YES	NO
3. Does your school have an effective and publicized grievance procedure?	YES	NO
4. (a) Are staff members made aware of the need for equity?	YES	NO
(b) Do you provide training or assistance in multicultural and gender fair classroom behavior and practices?	YES	NO
5. Are counseling, screening, testing, and placement procedures equitable for all students?	YES	NO
6. Are instructional materials reviewed for bias?	YES	NO
7. Do teachers receive training in the use of biased materials in a nonbiased way?	YES	NO
8. Are students informed about the significance of equity?	YES	NO
9. Do students understand their legal rights for an equal educational opportunity?	YES	NO
10. Are efforts made to keep the board, administration, staff, students, and parents informed about equity?	YES	NO

Scoring

9-10 “yes” answers: You have a model district!

7-8 “yes” answers: You are on the right track.

6 or fewer “yes” answers: Contact your state’s education agency for assistance in understanding and implementing equity.

Source: Adapted from material by the California State Department of Education.

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